TRANSCRIPT—David Fletcher, Fairview Community History Project

Interviewee: David Fletcher

Interviewers: Natalie Gerardo and Josie Ward

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Interviewers: Hi, this is Natalie Gerardo and Josie Ward interviewing David Fletcher on June 20th, 2018 at the community room in the Fairview library.

NG: Well, thanks again—

DF: --Sure

NG: --for coming to do this interview. Maybe we should just start with the very basics. When did you arrive in Fairview or were you born here?

JW: Oh, this is really about my grandfather, John Jamison. He moved here from Chicago, and he purchased the Sugar Hollow Farm and moved here in 1961. A little about his life; he was a son of a Presbyterian minister, grew up very humbly and the Depression came along and kind of wiped him out financially. He recovered but had a deep aversion to debt. So when he moved here he joined the Fairview Volunteer Fire Department in, I think around 1966, and when I say he joined it, he joined the Board of Directors for that, and so I'd like to talk about that a little bit. When the Fire Department started, they started (according to this letter) in a store of the basement that had one light bulb and they got started. Then when it came time to, when he was on the Board, they needed to expand. Fairview was growing and they wanted to buy equipment and there was some concern about how they wanted to raise the money for the equipment. Most of the Board members, and I think there were about six of them, wanted to simply borrow money. This was absolutely against his background and he thought 'don't borrow money' because again in this letter, it said 'If you borrow money you basically pay it back twice' and he was very much against that. So there was much contention from the Board from this. He persuaded the Board to finally go along with the fundraising and not to borrow money. My grandpa's a very persuasive man and so I don't know what the goal was to raise it, what the amount was, but he said basically I will be responsible for half the amount and the rest of you the other

half. And they raised the money. So he went to Biltmore Forest Country Club and the bulk of the members were trying to get this Fire Department going. With help and a lot of them did there. And he called his friends in Chicago. And also the Community, he went around to farms and so forth, raised his half of the money. One of the things the letter talked about the fundraising for the Fire Department. One event they had first was a donkey event. Really, it was donkey basketball in what is now the community center. They brought these donkeys in with rubber shoes on their hooves and you'd ride around and--

JW/NG: --Oh my God! I've heard about this but I didn't think it was real--

DF: This was long before the days of PETA. [chuckles softly] The whole community was there cheering these locals on. The score was probably, you know 4-2, against this game. That was the fundraising. [laughter from both]

JW: I so heard the story and I thought somebody made it up.

DF: I was there at the time, I was maybe eight years old. I actually remember it. [background laughter]

DF: Nowadays I have a donkey…I can't imagine riding him. That's about it.

JW: So where was this donkey basketball fundraiser held?

DF: It was inside what is now the community center. Back then it was the Fairview school's gymnasium which Annie Ager saved single-handedly pretty much. So the Fire Department has blossomed since then and you know it's changed so much. I thought that was kind of an interesting story to share with the library.

JW: Indeed. What do you know of why your grandfather chose Fairview from Chicago?

DF: He had several friends that came down here from Chicago that he knew. One friend was the Williams. And Mr. Williams had died and the estate was for sale. So my grandfather came down here and looked at the property, and it needed a lot of work and so he went to the seller's attorney and presented an offer in writing and handed it in to the attorney. The attorney picked up the offer and laughed at him, "You really don't want this place do you?" And he said "No, I really don't."
And two days later [he] got a phone call and accepted it.
He brought down three horses from Chicago. The horses had been inside a stable their whole lives so he, when they came here, he just opened the door and let them run out in the pasture and they just about killed themselves…running around, 'cause they'd never been out.
Ironically after he died, the house that they owned was destroyed by the fire, of all things.

JW: So you're, I know who you are now, you have the white barn with the old post office?

DF: Yes.

JW: Yeah, oh awesome. Your wife has told me to ask you about that post office because I've always wondered, like, what was going on at this cool little building in the corner?

DF: The post office was not really a post office. It was sales office for Sugar Hollow, the development there, run by Mr. Hypes and Mr. Williams, but Mr. Williams had died, so it was the mail drop for the community, is what it was. It's gone into severe disrepair and my son-in-law and my daughter want to take it on, to fix it up. Which, is great. Neighbors are cheering them on.

JW: It looks great.

DF: It never really had much of a purpose after 1962 let's say. I'm not sure what the future will bring for it now because it's just kind of an empty building. It's got a huge poplar tree right around back of it but I think I'm going to take it down because it's hurting the floor and things like this.

JW: Oh yeah, yeah, that's so cool and that barn is just amazing too.

DF: So you've talked to my wife apparently.

JW: I have.

DF: Just walking by or…?

JW: I think you guys have bought some pottery from me a couple of times, at the market, so… and maybe, that's probably it. But yeah, I've threatened to go run around in your field with my daughter and pet the paint horses.

DF: Any time you'd like to come. I think most of Fairview is very tolerant of people walk through their property. I can think of few exceptions to that but, Hopes Road. They're still people there. But ninety-nine percent of the people behave themselves.

JW: And I know the other one percent so it's okay. [Laughter about the one percent comment.]

NG: We won't ask you to go on record unless you want to.

DF: About what?

JW: About the one percent.

DF: Oh, (trash) and things like this.

JW: So were you born in Fairview?

DF: No. I was born in Illinois. My grandparents moved here when I was say, five years old, and

then my father moved here in 1972 and assumed the liabilities of the textile plant, which is at the corner of Sweeten Creek and I-40. And then the state took that land to build the cloverleaf. So back then the textile industry was pretty strong. After a while it was importing the material from Canada, so it dried up. That business eventually sold and folded about two years later. Glad I didn't get involved in that.

NG: Can you tell us the full name of your parents?

DF: Yes, Robert and Nancy Fletcher. And my mother lives in Deerfield and she turns ninety this fall.

JW: Deerfield is nice…

NG: Did they move on to Sugar Hollow?

DF: Never did. My father did not want to live this far out. So at this point I've got a daughter who wants to live there. An older brother whose wife has MS so probably not and another brother who is just not interested at all. Lives in Boston.

JW: So when your parents moved to town, you lived in Asheville?

DF: We lived in Biltmore Forest.

JW: And when did you personally move to Fairview?

DF: That's a difficult story. Not difficult but…so I got married in '85 and I was working overseas in the oil field. I came back and wanted to live here. At that point the property was owned by my grandmother. We'd hear "Well when your grandmother dies we can talk about you building out here." My grandmother lived to be ninety-eight. So it took a while. In 2000 we were able to buy some land and built out here and moved here in 2002 and been delighted out here. When I was a little boy growing up out here people from Sugar Hollow would go in to town once a week. There was a doctor, dry cleaner, the grocery store and everything else. It was not a sleeper town like it is now. So, things have really changed. Used to be agricultural value for the land. Now it's subdivided, subdivision land. It's progress. I think the wealth here has exploded over time. It's a very expensive place to live. People always want five acres and a stream, developed out here..

There was something I wanted to talk about…The characters in Fairview.

When I was growing up, being from Chicago, people couldn't understand me and vice versa. They were real characters, and either I've become one or maybe they've all died out. I don't know. All these mountain people grew up…they just grew up really hard with dirt floors, and they're long gone.

JW: Do you remember any particular people that you have in mind?

DF: I'm trying to think. Roy Ingle was an employee of my grandfather's and he grew up rough I know. Bobby Lanning. Clarence Lanning. They were both Black, wonderful people. Not sure what their history here was. Have you talked to Annie Ager about her?

[JW or NG must have shaken their head.]

JW: But there are many people being…

DF: Yeah, I'll tell one story about that. The Owenby family lived behind us. The Owenbys were a rough family; alcoholism and it was a big thing. And my grandfather had a road where you cross a stream to go over it. Later on a bridge was made. And one of the Owenbys was drunk and was walking home and his feet hurt, so he took his shoes off and put them in the stream. [Then he] passed out. That night it got really cold and the farm manager from the Clarke's farm happened to come across him, and his feet were frozen in the stream. So they chopped his feet out and he said "Oh, just hold me up to the sun and I'll be Alright." And saved his feet. [chuckles]

JW: That's hard living.

DF: That's hard living. What was his name? Baxter Owenby was his name. Baxter Owenby. His wife died and his…the preacher who had her funeral said to Baxter, "If you want to see your wife in heaven you've got to straighten yourself out." And he did. Trying to think of other locals. Marilyn Iles. She can tell you some good stories about a guy named Doc, who I haven't met. There was a story about the barn, the barn where it is now has a big rock in front of it.

JW: That big, pretty boulder?

DF: The barn was built in the 1930s. A man [was] sitting on that rock and a woman came walking by and he said something to her that we'd really call sexual harassment nowadays. She turned around and shot him dead. [Laughter all around.]

I don't know when this happened or names or anything like that but that's the story I heard.

JW: It'd happen less often if that's what would happen.

NG: Indeed.

JW: I have a question about all these stories. How do you remember being told them?

DF: Different sources. The one about Baxter Owenby and the stream, Annie Ager could tell you that. Maybe sometimes things get a little distorted. The story about the rock with the shooting, I think I heard that third hand. John Ager would know that. He was principal of--I think there was a Fairview High School at one point. But I think he was the source of that. And maybe as time goes by your memory fills in things, but the donkey basketball I remember very well. The crowd just loved it and roared, big fundraiser.

JW: So when you were a child would you describe Fairview as the place where everyone knew one another?

DF: Yes, for the college educated people you went to Sugar Hollow. Clarke told me, everyone else was not [college educated], and that has changed over the years too. Sugar Hollow, back then was Chicago people from the north side were strictly Republican, very hard core. Nowadays it's switched. I'm definitely in the minority over there.

JW: Was Sugar Hollow particularly a religious place?

DF: No, it was not.

JW: Adamantly not?

DF: Not necessarily. No more or no less than any other place.

JW: And I'm wondering, you made a mention of Fairview businesses that you remember people used to go to rather than going in to town? Are there any there any particular ones you have strong memories of?

DF: Yes. Well, to go to a grocery store you'd have to go to a Bi-Lo. And the Bi-Lo was…I'm trying to think what it is now… It was right next to municipal golf course, way down there in East Asheville. You'd go to Fairview Supply which is now Dickie's #3 and they had clothing, groceries, general store type of thing. There was also Guy Merrell's store which is now almost the last gas station you could get to.

NG: Caleb's place. Or the Fairview grocery.

DF: Yeah, and the storefront faced the road at that point. My memory of it was you'd walk in and there'd be a single light bulb from the ceiling sort of thing, and a bunch of old men in overalls, sitting. And as you'd walk in they'd just stop talking, which made things kind of uncomfortable.

JW: Do you remember any medical facilities?

DF: The nearest one was Bat Cave…Bat Cave Clinic. Which Will Hamilton could tell you more about.

JW: Will Hamilton?

DF: Yes. Dr. Will Hamilton. He could tell you a lot of stories. One story he had was the Owenbys again. Baxter Owenby had a number of children and he had some attractive daughters, and some suitors came by to see them. Baxter got out there with a shotgun and got a few rounds off and they went tearing through a barbed wire fence and one got all cut up by the barb wires so they went to see Dr. Hamilton about getting him sewn up. Sandy Lynch, have you talked to him? Sandy's…if you drive 74 you go past Smith's farm. There's a long straightaway. That's Lynch's Bottom named after his family which goes back generations and he could tell you about many things. Sandy is not doing well, he's got a, not a disease but a condition that-he's losing his speech, so he'd be a great person to talk to. A lot of stories there.

JW: Thanks for all these names and we'll pass them along.

NG: We'll steal some…

DF: Yeah, he'd be a great source. You've got the Owenby family. Clarence Owenby. He's a local guy but [I] don't think he'd want to talk to you. His house where he grew up [was in] Owenby Cove. There's a trailer and there's a log home and I think there were eight people living there, grew up there. The log home was a square maybe fourteen by fourteen, maybe. So they lifted the roof up to put a second story on it. For a sleeping loft. Clarence has always lived here. When the Vietnam War came along he was drafted in the Army and deserted twice. The MPs would come knock on his mother's door and he'd go out the back door.

JW: What was the general feeling in Fairview about the Vietnam war?

DF: I don't know, I was a little guy back then. I would suspect they were supportive 'cause that's what you did then. Anything else? You ask great questions.

JW: We've got a bunch of questions, as long as your game.

DF: I just think I'm a newcomer.

JW: You feel like a newcomer?

DF: Again, yeah my childhood memories, going back to when I was let's say fourteen and then a gap until I was fifty let's say. Again, I always wanted to live out here. I remember coming down here one time when we came down to see my grandfather on Christmas Eve. We drove down from Chicago. He

had a new horse (I was in the eighth grade) and wanted to ride the horse. [He] put a saddle on the horse, went down to the pasture, horse took off running, pulled him back and he bucked. First buck got me loose and the second one got me on his rear and the third one I went to the moon, I probably weighed 70 pounds, and came down and broke my arm and stood up and sat down next to a fence post and couldn't get back up. Trying to get an orthopedic man on Christmas Eve was a job.

NG: I bet. Pardon me if you've already told us, you told us about your grandfather's work for the Volunteer Fire Department. But did you tell us what he was doing for a living? Or did he move here in retirement?

DF: Well, he retired early. He didn't want to come here. He was a Northwestern Mutual Insurance agent. Another story about him; so he purchased the farm in about '58, so he took early retirement. I think he was sixty-four at that point. He was born in 1898. My grandmother was born in 1900. My grandfather was a schoolteacher when he was in eighth grade in Pennsylvania. I guess he fit the bill. He went to some college after that, but they had standardized tests they took in Pennsylvania and all his students passed and he was very proud of that. He had a chance meeting with the president of the Harvard Alumni Association in New York City and so he talked with them for a while and the man said "How would you like to go to Harvard?" And my grandfather said to him, "Well, I'd really like to go to Yale." So instead of being offended by this, he arranged an interview. My grandfather went to Yale University when he was twenty-four. Worked in a birdcage factory during that time to pay the bills. Very colorful life. I've forgotten many stories about him. Worked as a strikebreaker for a while. (Had a coat, and he'd hold a light out to the side, didn't want to see his face, so if they shot him they wouldn't be shooting at his chest.) He's speak very gruffly about breaking stries. Very colorful life.

JW: Did he work the land when he moved down here?

DF: Yeah, he brought down three horses and tried to make a profit off the land. The IRS was after him about you can't take losses yet you have to make a profit and he said 'tell me how to do that' and he would to this day have trouble, I minimize how much money I lose with my farm that I own. So, ginseng was a big thing. He bought a bushel basket of ginseng seed and planted it on his property. Then seven years later, when you're supposed to harvest ginseng, someone said, "well if you give it a couple of more years you'll have bigger roots" and during

that time he got wiped out.

JW: Wiped out? Like someone stole it?

DF: Yeah, dug it up.

JW: Probably the person who told him not to harvest it yet. [laughter]

DF: Could well be. So that's why people, old mountain people, don't like you going out on their land, for reasons such as that.

JW: It's interesting to hear Fairview sound like a mountain town, like a really distinct place from Asheville. Now it feels so much closer Do you remember the distance between Fairview and Asheville when you were a kid?

DF: Again, it was a full day to go into town to things. I remember coming down here with my cousins. We'd go to the Dreamland Drive In to watch a movie on "Flipper" or "Glass Bottom Boat" with Doris Day. Very fond memories.

NG: I remember that one.

DF: If you drove to Gerton there was a pool there right across the street from the community center. And it was spring fed and it was cold, cold water. It's long gone.

JW: Do you have an opinion that, when we all got together here and were talking about this project, the question came up where is the heart of Fairview. Pin it down.

DF: I would say I'm always asked what is downtown Fairview and I would have to say its Food Lion. But prior to that it was the Fairview store at the corner of Cane Creek. That was the meeting place.

NG: Was that the same Fairview hardware that had the car drove through it? Before Dickies got there?

DF: That was Dickie's, yes.

JW: That was like, before the Dickie's?

DF: I'm trying to think of the name of the guy that owned it before that. People would talk about him. His name was Jolly or something.

NG: I remember being able to go in there and buy like, a gun. [laughter]

DF: They had pretty much everything. Oh, the post office. When I was a little boy the post office was now Hot Dog King.

JW: No kidding.

NG: Oh, the brick building.

DF: And then they moved from Hot Dog King to what is now Brewskies and I'd been to that building with my grandfather, and it was the post office back then and it wasn't there very long apparently and then they moved to near the Food Lion.

JW: So this wasn't a WPA post office?

DF: WPA?

NG: Oh, sorry, the Works Public Administration built a lot of public buildings like post offices and schools.

DF: I have no idea about that. One memory I have, I was sixteen years old and we mentioned Lynch's Bottom, that long straightaway and I had my mother's Pontiac Tempest, so I got to the start Sugar Hollow Road and I punched the accelerator down that straightaway and, I guess I was doing 90 miles an hour or so, and came up on Hollywood Road. There was a patrolman sitting there, it was a sheriff's deputy. And I immediately got that car in low gear, and waited for the consequences that never came.

JW: Really?

DF: I don't know why. Maybe he was having a nap there. Story about Jim Clarke-all these people you should talk to-but Jim Clarke would see a highway patrolman down on the curves below Sherrill's Inn. So he called his friend up, say 'oh somebody broke down, come down right away, right away'so this guy goes flying around the curve and sure enough the patrolman was right there. What else? Dr. Doug Clarke was the youngest of the Clarke family, and they would play baseball. So there'd be a foul ball and [it would] go off into the woods there and so his older brother would say to Doug, "You go look for the ball, we're going to pray for divine guidance about where the ball is." Doug would have to go off and look for the ball. And they would just sit there and wait for him. [Laughter]

JW: So you mentioned that Sugar Hollow had the reputation that if you were college-educated, you worked there. Were there other neighborhoods in Fairview that had a distinct reputation, because of professions or ethnic neighborhoods developing?

DF: No. I would say there were not subdivisions back then. A few houses had a long history behind them. Worth Frady would be a great one to talk to but he's died. His wife owns that, driving down Lynch's Bottom, on the left is a green and white house that I guess was her family's. Been occupied as long as I know of. Roy Ramsey-have you talked to him? Ramsey's Farm.

JW: Many of them are probably on the list.

DF: I hope so. He's kind of a man who keeps to himself, but you get him talking, he will talk. Ramsey's farm do you know where that is? Wilson Road.

JW: She does. I'm a real newcomer. Not your kind of newcomer.

NG: You mentioned to me…were there particular parks or athletic fields that weren't related to the schools that you remember going to?

DF: Not really. One thing that came to mind was, if you go on Hollywood Road, there was an old race track there that they would race, um, "stock car" is too good a word. They'd race cars back there. They had bleachers there. Annie Ager would talk about sneaking in there when she was a little girl. The concession stand still stands today. It's kind of in the middle of the field.

JW: Also there is another race track randomly on a topo map for a GPS triangle race track. Was that a big thing in Fairview?

DF: It probably was. Hollywood Road has a very colorful past to it. My source for this was John Ager. He said in the 1920s they were going to make a development for wealthy people from Florida coming in. They sold a bunch of land, they had big ideas for an upscale development there, and then the 1930s came along and then you had two or more individuals claiming title to a land and it was quite a fiasco. But boy, John Ager can help with that.

JW: Is it Edger or Ager I'm hearing?

DF: Ager. A.G.E.R. And John Ager.

JW: Related to Annie Ager?

DF: Annie Ager was a Clarke who worked at Sherrill's Inn. Oh you're just…you're just scratching the surface here. Talk to these people. Marilyn Iles in Sugar Hollow. She goes to the Adirondack mountains this time of year, but she's well into her '90s. Be a good person to talk to. You're asking great questions.

JW: You said you had a big gap between fourteen and fifty. What was different or the same when you came back and lived in Fairview?

DF: It had changed. Again, Fairview was an agricultural town, it was its own separate community, not Super Town. So the ticket out of

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Fairview was a place called Sayles Bleachery and that was where the Walmart in east Asheville sits now. So that was a job you could get, and make, you know factory wages sort of thing. Like I say with land value, when my grandfather died in '82 our acreage was appraised at five thousand an acre. When my grandmother died around 2000 it was twelve thousand an acre. Now it's about thirty thousand an acre. It's changed so much.

JW: What would you say are some of the biggest changes to the physical landscape?

DF: I think the road. I think that it was needed but it changes things. I think of the town of Fletcher with Hendersonville Road coming through it. That just really kind of messed it up I think. When we moved out here I said to a neighbor of mine, "We're kind of a long way from Asheville," and he said "Don't worry, Asheville will come to you." And I see the creep going up Mine Hole Gap with the apartment buildings. You see little businesses developing and torn down and bigger ones in its place, and that's sad to see.

JW: Do you feel that Fairview is at risk of losing its identity, its discrete sense of place?

DF: Perhaps. I think several years ago they had a thing on zoning and said we're the largest area in the state that doesn't have any zoning. It's a real hot topic. They had a meeting at the Community Center on it and people were shouted down. John Ager specifically in favor of it. And Darcel Grimes came with a television crew and said, "Let's take some film pretty quick and get out of here. It's going to get bad."

JW: When was this?

DF: Before I was here, so twenty five years ago. I think zoning starts with "You can control our land, you can outlaw our trailers, and then you're going for our guns" sort of a mentality. Sandy Lynch talks about his grandfather talking about near the area where the bakery was, where those two women ran the bakery, that was a delicious place.

NG: The Ruth and Ranshaw?

DF: Ruth and Ranshaw! Right there was a spring was in the road and his car got stuck-this was back long before pavement. You want some phone numbers to contact these people?

NG: What we'll do is give the list of names to them. And they'll follow up with you if you don't mind.

DF: Sure. These stories are coming to me second hand.

NG: That is the nature of oral history though. What's interesting are the stories that last.

DF: I've said for years that when someone dies around here, a little bit of history goes with them. We own a very modest cabin that my mother owns. You look at it [and] it's got different additions put on you can tell over the years. One many, Merrell was his name and a good friend of my grandfathers who could tell the history of who lived there when and so forth, and I forget.

NG: There's something about people that grow up in a particular place that know it this well. They can see through buildings and tell you the story of the people that lived in it.

DF: I miss the characters who were here, growing up, they were colorful people. Sunny and Ellen, do you know who that is?

JW: Sunny…

DF: And Ellen.

NG: And Ellen.

DF: If you drive to Gerton past the Fire Department you'll see a sign that said "Hillbilly."

JW: Oh yeah.

DF: He'd be worth talking to. His wife, Ellen, makes beer runs. You've seen her?

NG: Yeah, I give her rides every now and then.

DF: She usually makes a couple of beer runs a day and hitchhikes back. All these people that worked for my grandfather at one point, he was kind of a different sort of guy. If he saw a stick on the road he'd get his grandson to get it and things like this. He wanted it very clean. But the lot of these men in that are now in their 70s I run across come every now and then, like Roy Ramsey, I'll talk about my Grandfather with him. How my grandfather came and knocked on his door with his father and, you know, soliciting money for the Fire Department and they'd write a check for five hundred dollars and that was a lot of money back then.

NG: He must have gotten to know a lot of people during that campaign.

DF: He was very much grew up humbly and with life insurance background. He always knew everyone, yes. The door to door work. We had people from Grover's Road, I'm not going to mention their name, but they were very black and white people. He was a doctor from Chicago and they were

absolutely miserable here, and they wanted to gate their community, and just have their own little oasis away from the

backward locals. The gate was voted down. People rode their horses through there; he confronted with them. They were miserable here. Absolutely miserable. And they eventually left and went

to Fort Collins, Colorado.

NG: That says something about the neighborhood here

DF: I think, for instance a leash law. Every community has a leash law. And if someone went out

without a leash, and they would call the police on everyone. Fairview is not black and white, you kind of

go with the flow a bit more.

JW: Nearing the end of my questions, I think. Before we end can you just describe the letters

we're scanning?

DF: This is a letter to somebody I don't know raising money for the Fire Department. This is a

letter basically, it's a long letter to the members of the Fire Department Board of Directors. Apparently

They had a very contentious meeting. A lot of interruptions apparently. And he's just writing about trying to

find common ground and his points about borrowing money and so forth. And he was very good at

that. I would go to him when I was a little boy--

NG: This was your grandfather?

DF: Yeah. I wasn't going to do something and I don't care what he said, I'm not going to do it.

I would go to him and he would approach it as "Well, why aren't you going to do it?" It was a matter of time and of

course I'm going to do it, break the argument down and leave there thinking I wasn't going to do that and I did.

NG: Sounds like he would've been a good insurance salesman.

DF: He really was very good at it. So that's what the letter the Board of Directors…that's what the donkey event is, that's what he's

referring to, the donkey basketball.

JW: Do you know why in particular the Volunteer Fire Department was so important to him?

DF: I think when people retire, my experience is when people retire young, they're looking for a cause.

I see condominiums where some guy is a frustrated executive and they say "I'm going to straighten them out",

That was his passion and he wanted to make a difference.

JW: Are you still involved with that Fire Department?

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DF: No. I understand it's very political. One recent memory I had of them (my understanding is Will Hamilton knows the Chief there, went to school with him. But the Chief before that, I've got a good stream running though my property, Ashworth Creek, and he wanted to put a fire, water pick out there. So I called the chief up about that and said I want to donate this land to put this--

(Phone rings)

DF: Wanted to put a dry hydrant to pick up water for the Fire Department and he kept coming up with all these reasons why not and I was very persistent with him and he said "Well I'll come out there and look at it and give you a call" but he never did. I thought that was very disappointing. When I moved here, calling and applied for insurance and we talked about Fairview Fire Department and she said "would you like to know how fire departments are rated. I said sure and she said they're rated on a scale from one to ten, one being the best, Fairview is a nine- minus. Back then. I don't know what it is today.

NG: That's disappointing,

DF: Disappointing. Another story about that. My grandfather, when he purchased the property, there was a big bell. He gathered all of his grandkids out there and said, "Never ring the bell." Nowadays we have people who could misinterpret that. So never did ring the bell.

JW: Describe that bell.

DF: Two wooden posts with a rope on it. Again, you were not to touch the bell.

JW: And you listened.

DF: Oh yes. He said it's unlikely a fire truck would come, but that was the purpose of it.

JW: What did kids do to get in trouble in Fairview?

DF: Mrs. Early who died. My grandfather's barn, he was into physical fitness and so he bought this barn and had a hayloft above it he'd made into gymnasium so that neighborhood people could pay basketball upstairs and that was a good thing, kept kids out of trouble. But, a few kids went to jail. Randy McAbee? You wouldn't talk to him. Talk to him he'd be a character talking about jail and so forth. People would go, to jail for fencing stolen items. I think people would go, maybe in their teen years, be a little wild and then settle down and get married.

JW: Start working hard?

DF: Yep. Some never did. With alcohol, the Baptists look at alcohol in my opinion as being all or nothing. There's no such thing as you come home and have a beer at night, you had a twelve pack or something like that and that was their mentality. A lot of wrecks on weekend, I think. With people getting killed and so forth.

JW: So the Baptists were the most predominate congregations?

DF: I think in this whole part of the country pretty much so.

JW: Well I guess we should say thank you so much for sharing your memories and someone else's memories. So much more helpful than I am.

NG: It's a patchwork. Your memories as a newcomer are different. You're noticing things differently.

DF: Yeah.

JW: I'm going to double check all of these names with you.

DF: Sure.

NG and JW: Thank you so much.

JW: You want to scan this?

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Jan Wolff, November 4, 2019.